



CEDAR VALLEY PAGE A3
VALLEY RALLY
Cedar Valley United Way campaign kicks off with luncheon, 'Blues Brothers' music

COME ALIVE PAGE A7
FAIR PLAY
NCC organizers look to draw crowds with diverse entertainment lineup



THE COURIER

THURSDAY | SEPTEMBER 1, 2011 WATERLOO www.wfcourier.com CEDAR FALLS NEWSSTAND PRICE 75¢

Irene pushes gasoline prices higher

By JIM OFFNER
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WATERLOO — What does Hurricane Irene have to do with the Cedar Valley?

Plenty, as it turns out, for drivers, who have seen fuel prices jump by about a dime per gallon in the last week.

As of Wednesday, according to AAA, the price of regular unleaded gas averaged \$3.67 per gallon across the Cedar Valley, compared with \$3.59 a week earlier. It was down, however, from \$3.69 at the same point in July. The price was \$2.68 a year ago.

The price hit its all-time high of \$4.002 at area stations May 8.

The Category 1 storm fizzled compared to the frothy angst it stirred up as it approached the Northeast at the end of last week. However, it did bring heavy winds and rain that blew across the region and froze activity at refineries, in the Northeast whose normal output is about 1 million barrels of gasoline per day, according to the Oil Price Information Service. That's nearly 10 percent of U.S. refining capacity.

"There's two things that move the stock and commodity markets," said Mike Breard, oil and gas research analyst with Dallas-based Hodges Capital Management Inc. "One is the computers that are trading futures at the push of a button. The other is 24-hour news. You can turn on the news any time and get scared to death. This hurricane was supposed to wipe out the entire East Coast and wasn't as bad as expected."

But the panic swirling around the storm that dominated national headlines for days before it reached landfall reverberated across the country and into the Cedar Valley, analysts noted.

Worse, with the late-summer hurricane season in full swing, the prospect of future storms can push around fuel prices like a schoolyard bully, according to Patrick DeHaan, senior petroleum analyst with Gas-Buddy.com, which tracks fuel-pricing trends nationwide.

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| Waterloo-Cedar Falls | | | | |
|--|---------|-----------|---------|---------|
| | Regular | Mid | Premium | Diesel |
| Current | \$3.666 | \$3.592 | \$3.819 | \$3.832 |
| Yesterday | \$3.642 | \$3.554 | \$3.817 | \$3.832 |
| Week Ago | \$3.587 | \$3.506 | \$3.703 | \$3.827 |
| Month Ago | \$3.691 | \$3.610 | \$3.857 | \$3.921 |
| Year Ago | \$2.680 | \$2.821 | \$2.957 | \$2.955 |
| Highest Recorded Average Price: | | | | |
| Regular Unleaded | \$4.002 | 5/8/2011 | | |
| Diesel | \$4.731 | 7/18/2008 | | |

Source: AAA COURIER GRAPHIC / DAVID HEMENWAY

Thunder in the Valley draws praise



Thousands turned out Saturday and Sunday for the Thunder in the Valley Air Show. Headliners were the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds.

Organizers: Air show a huge success but financial picture isn't yet clear

By DENNIS MAGEE
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WATERLOO — The air show was a success beyond organizers' expectations, even loftiest dreams, helped along by nearly perfect weather, daring pilots and the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds.

Fans are letting Chris Harshbarger, director of Thunder in the Valley, know they liked what they experienced.

"It's unbelievable. People have called my home phone, my cell phone. They're total strangers, and they are expressing their enthusiasm and gratitude," he said.

"We did the best we could, and the people of this community are the best friends and neighbors anybody in American would ever hope to have," Harshbarger said.

In particular, callers are thanking committee members, volunteers and sponsors who pulled off an event of this magnitude.

"I may be revealing too much. But I have been moved to tears more than once," Harshbarger said.

To make the air show happen, a thousand independent agents and entities tackled 10,000 details, according to Harshbarger. In particular, he noted those parking vehicles.

"Doug Walters and his team were fabulous," Harshbarger said.

Law enforcement officials from Waterloo, Cedar Falls, Black Hawk County and the state also coordinated efforts to keep cars rolling on nearby streets and highways.

"They just did an incredible job of moving traffic," Harshbarger said.

Officials estimate between 50,000 to 55,000 people attended over two days. They had hoped for that number each day, though, which raises the question of whether the air show met necessary financial goals to make it an annual event.

See **AIR SHOW**, page A15

Obama heads to Congress with jobs plan

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama will deliver a rare address to a joint session of Congress next week to introduce a long-awaited plan for jobs and economic growth, but not before being forced to yield in a test of wills with House Speaker John Boehner over not what he would say, but when he would say it.

Obama agreed to schedule his address on Sept. 8 after Boehner balked at the president's request for a Sept. 7 speech.

Obama's address still gives him a grand stage to unveil his economic agenda, though it falls on the same evening as the opening game of the National Football League season. White House officials were working on the precise timing of the speech in hopes of avoiding a conflict.

The change will allow a planned Sept. 7 Republican presidential debate in Simi Valley, Calif., to proceed without Obama upstaging it.

Still, by seeking a rare joint session of Congress as his audience, Obama will get a nationally televised address that puts him face to face with Republican lawmakers who have bitterly opposed his agenda and who have vowed to vote down any new spending he might propose.

"It is our responsibility to find bipartisan solutions to help grow our economy, and if we are willing to put country before party, I am confident we can do just that," Obama wrote Wednesday in a letter to Boehner, R-Ohio, and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev.

The White House budget office today is expected to provide revised budget forecasts and the Labor Department on Friday will release new August unemployment numbers. The two sets of data will highlight Obama's challenge: addressing short-term demands to increase jobs and shore up the economy while minding long-term budget deficits.

In seeking a joint session of Congress to deliver his plan, the president is turning the effort into a public relations campaign.

Emphasizing that strategy and illustrating the fine line between governing and political campaigning, Obama issued a plea through his presidential campaign late Wednesday calling for public support in holding Congress accountable.

See **JOBS**, page A15



President Obama



John Boehner

Court: Iowa girl can't receive deceased father's benefits

■ Girl's birth followed artificial insemination two years after her father died.

DES MOINES (AP) — An Iowa girl who was born two years after her father died is not eligible to receive his Social Security Benefits, a federal appeals court has ruled.

The 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals' decision this week reversed a district court ruling that granted benefits to the girl, who is

now 8 years old.

Her mother, Patti Beeler of West Branch, had filed for the benefits on behalf of her daughter in 2003 but was denied by the Social Security Administration because of a state law's definition of "natural child" and the inheritance rights of a child. Bruce Beeler died of leukemia in 2001, and Patti Beeler was later artificially inseminated with sperm the couple had decided to preserve.

Patti Beeler sued to challenge the agency's decision and won, but that was overturned by the St. Louis-based court, which ruled

Monday that the girl did not satisfy requirements under Iowa's inheritance laws to be eligible for her father's benefits.

Telephone messages left Wednesday for Beeler and her attorney were not immediately returned. The Social Security Administration referred questions to the U.S. attorney's office, but an administration spokesman said in an email to the AP that only a handful of cases had arisen in recent years.

The government has asked the U.S. Supreme Court to review the issue, after a federal appeals court

ruled that a child conceived after a father's death was entitled to Social Security benefits. The request cites 18 different cases, including the Iowa case. The U.S. attorney's office said similar cases have been decided in favor of and against the Social Security Administration in other courts of appeals. The Supreme Court has not decided whether to grant the request.

No data was available on the number of pregnancies conceived through artificial means after a father has died, but information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates that

more than 61,400 infants were born in 2008, the most recent data available, after being conceived through assisted reproductive technology. The most common form is in vitro fertilization. The data was collected from 426 fertility clinics across the country.

At dispute in the Iowa case is an outdated law that limited inheritance rights to a child who had a relationship with a person at the time of that person's death. The Iowa Legislature passed a bill earlier this year granting inheritance

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